

Intergroup Relations in Post-Conflict Contexts

How the Past Influences the Present (and Future)

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The psychological study of intergroup relations can trace its intellectual roots to the earliest days of the discipline (Wundt's *Völkerpsychologie*, or *Psychology of the People*; see Danziger, 1983) in the late nineteenth century. However, experimental research on this topic was mainly stimulated by events or movements that revealed uncivil aspects of civil societies. In the United States in the 1920s, psychologists began to question the validity of broad inferences about fundamental differences in human capacities based on race and ethnicity. Racial prejudice and bias came to be recognized more generally in US society as unfair and irrational. There was only limited empirical interest in intergroup relations within modern social psychology in Europe until the classic work in the 1960s by Serge Moscovici, Jacob Rabbie, and Henri Tajfel. The interest of these scholars – all Jewish – in intergroup relations likely reflected the profound impact of their experiences during the Nazis' rise to power in Germany and Europe. During World War II, Moscovici was interned in a forced labor camp, Rabbie was in hiding in the Netherlands, and Tajfel was in a prison camp for French officers.

Despite the historical forces that shaped the field's interest in this topic, much of the recent emphasis in social psychology has been on intergroup relations outside of their historical and political context. In fact, it was Tajfel's classic work on the minimal group paradigm that revolutionized how the field of social psychology understood intergroup relations; it reoriented the field to study intergroup processes in their purist psychological form. The minimal group paradigm strips away different elements, such as information about the relations between the ingroup and outgroup (e.g., competition) and the meaningful nature of group assignment, to examine the role that group membership itself plays in social processes. Intergroup bias appeared under even the most minimal conditions of group assignment.

The present chapter builds upon the essential processes of intergroup relations illuminated by the minimal group paradigm and recent work on social cognition and social categorization (see Dovidio & Gaertner, 2010, for a review), but it emphasizes the additional role that historical forces have on contemporary relations between groups. It is not surprising that historical intergroup conflict shapes present and future intergroup relations, but, drawing on empirical evidence, we identify the particular psychological legacy of violence and oppression. Even when there is no immediate or anticipated future crisis, intergroup relations may be characterized by divergent perspectives and goals, and by wariness, misperceptions, and distrust. If left unmanaged, intergroup interactions can reinforce the cultural differences in perspectives of members of different groups.

To explore the role of historical forces in shaping current intergroup relations, this chapter draws on research conducted within the context of race relations in the United States. The crisis of race relations there has involved political debate, oppression, and violence around the issues of loss of civility, equal rights, and constitutional rights of Black Americans. Race has played a central role in the history of the United States, and has been the source of conflict since the earliest settlement of the nation. The question of the rights of Black Americans was the focus of intense debate about slavery in the writing of the Constitution of the United States in the 1780s, a major issue leading to the Civil War in the mid-1800s, and the basis of racial conflict during the Civil Rights Movement of the mid-1900s. Conflict over the rights of Blacks was legally resolved in the United States with the landmark Civil Rights Legislation in the 1960s. As such, much of this chapter focuses on the "post-conflict" relations between White and Black Americans since the passing of the Civil Rights Legislation. Although our focus is embedded within this particular context, we also demonstrate the generalizability of these processes to other forms of post-conflict intergroup dynamics.

In the next section, we very briefly summarize foundational processes identified largely through basic research using minimal group paradigms and laboratory-created groups. We then illustrate how members of different groups often have divergent perspectives on intergroup relations. Next, we consider the importance of historical events and conflict in shaping not only the perspectives but also the needs and motives that members of different groups, particularly majority and minority groups, pursue in the present. Following on from this, we discuss the influence of these processes on expectations for intergroup interaction, the dynamics of these interactions, and the outcome and experience of intergroup interactions. Finally, we conclude by explaining how psychological research and theory suggest interventions to facilitate constructive engagement that can meet the needs of members of different groups to create stable and equitable relations between groups.

Basic Needs and Intergroup Relations

The vast array of behaviors, good and bad, that different people exhibit across time and situations appears to have its roots in a limited number of fundamental needs and motivations. While there may be debate over how many core motives there are, there is general consensus that people have general motivations for understanding, enhancing status, and being accepted and belonging. These needs shape social relations, including intragroup and intergroup behavior, in significant ways. For example, people seek to affiliate with others in groups to reduce uncertainty and increase feelings of security. They also engage in intergroup comparisons and behaviors (e.g., discrimination) that promote the status of one's group, thereby enhancing self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Indeed, the mere categorization of people into groups initiates a range of cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to establish or maintain the status of one's own group (i.e., the "ingroup") relative to other groups (i.e., the "outgroup"). For example, people spontaneously evaluate ingroup members more favorably than outgroup members, feel more comfortable with and are more trusting of ingroup members, and are more cooperative with and spontaneously helpful toward ingroup members (see Dovidio & Gaertner, 2010, for a review). These processes appear deeply rooted in humans' evolutionary past.

Because of these psychological needs and behavioral tendencies, coupled with historical, economic, and political forces, groups within societies tend to become hierarchically organized. This hierarchical organization characterizes social structures across cultures and time. Where groups are located in this hierarchy, historically as well as presently, influences the

perceptions, perspective, and priority of needs of group members. The “social realities” of the majority (dominant) group and of minority (non-dominant) groups in societies are thus fundamentally different.

Majority and Minority Perspectives on Intergroup Relations

Members of majority groups generally enjoy more material resources and better physical and psychological health than members of minority groups. They also experience different social realities. One consequence of these different realities is that majority and minority group members develop divergent perspectives on their intergroup relations. For example, representative surveys in the United States show vastly different perceptions of the prevalence of racial bias there. In recent national surveys, only one-third of Whites but nearly three-quarters of Blacks reported that racial discrimination is a major factor accounting for disparities in income and education levels (USA Today/Gallup, 2008). Whereas a vast majority of Whites (71 percent) reported that they were satisfied with the way Blacks are treated in society, a nearly equivalent proportion of Blacks (68 percent) reported that they were *dissatisfied* with the way Blacks are treated in the United States (Gallup Minority Rights and Relations Survey, 2007).

The different perspectives of Whites and Blacks further appear to reflect processes that characterize the intergroup orientations of members of majority and minority groups more generally. Across cultures, members of disadvantaged groups perceive intergroup relations less positively than do members of dominant groups. For example, Binder et al. (2009) showed that, across three European countries (Belgium, England, and Germany), members of minority groups perceived the quality of their intergroup contact less favorably than did members of majority groups, and were more socially guarded in these interactions. Differences in prior personal experiences and the contemporary social and political aspects of intergroup relations contribute to these divergent perspectives between members of majority and minority groups. However, we propose that historical intergroup conflict also exerts a critical influence.

Psychological Legacies: How the Past Influences the Present and Future of Intergroup Relations

Intergroup conflict comes in many forms. There may be a specific galvanizing event (e.g., the 9/11 terrorist attack in the United States)

or extended acts of direct, often extreme violence (e.g., the Holocaust, the Rwandan genocide). However, violence can also become embedded in social structures, perpetuated over time supported by system-justifying ideologies. Whereas *direct violence* involves intentional, dramatic, and explicit acts of aggression against members of other groups, *structural violence* represents a chronic affront to the well-being of members of other groups through relatively permanent social arrangements that privilege some groups while depriving others (Christie, Tint, Wagner, & Winter, 2008). In the United States, the institution of slavery, the violence (e.g., lynchings) that occurred well after the emancipation of slaves, and the disparities in economic and educational opportunities due to discrimination that was legal in many parts of the country through the 1960s have had a deep and lasting impact on intergroup relations between Whites and Blacks. In this section, we consider the psychological and social impact of this history of conflict on contemporary race relations.

Although both Whites and Blacks in the United States understand the historical facts of slavery, and subsequent forms of racial conflict there, the narratives of racial oppression and discrimination diverge for Blacks and Whites. Jones, Engelman, Turner, and Campbell (2009) described the nature of this divergence: “Black people have both individual and collective histories that make racism psychologically available at any given moment to provide an interpretative context for understanding one’s experience and predicting the likelihood that racial group membership will affect their life course” (p. 120). They propose that, as a consequence, Blacks’ experiences are shaped by the universal context of racism – perceptions of racism as an accessible, explanatory construct with motivational consequences. For Blacks, the past represents the lens through which they see and interpret contemporary race relations. By contrast, Whites perceive the same historical events in terms of a conflict of the *past*, events in stark contrast to the fairness of the present. According to Jones et al. (2009), attending to this historical racial conflict activates for Whites the universal context of fairness. It emphasizes the fairness of contemporary society, in contrast to past racism, and minimizes the contributions of race and racial bias as a factor in current racial disparities. For Whites, the past is a history of events that have little bearing on contemporary race relations; for Blacks, the past “lives” in the present and informs the future of race relations.

Because Whites fail to attend fully to the influence of historical injustice and focus on contemporary standards, they perceive racism as an individual-level phenomenon. They attribute racism and discrimination to the intentional actions of a minority of atypical Whites motivated by

intergroup antipathy to injure Blacks. Indeed, most White Americans today perceive themselves as non-prejudiced and are highly motivated to appear and be unbiased in their interactions with Blacks (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004). However, because Blacks perceive continuity from the past to the present (and to the future), they view racism as pervasive, largely embedded in social structures and policies, not due primarily to a few “bad actors.” Perhaps as a consequence, Blacks are more pessimistic about the future of race relations than are Whites. This gap is narrowing, but mainly because of the increasing pessimism of Whites. In 2001, 66 percent of Blacks and 47 percent of Whites surveyed agreed with the statement that race relations “will always be a problem”; in 2003, 72 percent of Blacks and 62 percent of Whites agreed with that statement (Civil Rights and Race Relations Survey, 2004). In addition, Whites and Blacks view racial disparities through different lenses. Whites emphasize how far Blacks have come historically, whereas Blacks focus on how far they have to go to achieve full equality.

The legacy of historical intergroup conflict and relations goes beyond shaping different group perspectives. It also determines different psychological needs and associated motivations of members of minority (or victimized) groups and majority (or perpetrator) groups in intergroup encounters. Shnabel and Nadler (2008) initially demonstrated that an interpersonal transgression (e.g., harshly evaluating another’s work) aroused different needs among individuals responsible for the transgression (perpetrators) and those disadvantaged by the action (victims). Perpetrators had an enhanced need to be accepted by their partner as moral, whereas victims had an enhanced need for empowerment. Similarly, at the intergroup level, members of groups responsible for historic harm seek acceptance in their contemporary interactions with members of the injured groups, whereas members of the victimized group seek to be seen as competent and feel empowered in their exchange (see Shnabel & Noor, this volume).

Drawing attention to historical transgressions has comparable effects within the context of Black-White relations in the United States. A study by Ditlmann, Purdie-Vaughns, and Dovidio (2011), building on the work of Shnabel and Nadler (2008), investigated the impact of making past conflict salient on the content of intergroup communications. Black participants viewed a segment of a documentary about slavery or a documentary about mountains, and then wrote open letters to a White student with whom they would potentially interact. These letters were systematically coded for expressions of power or affiliation. Ditlmann et al. hypothesized that Black participants who viewed the segment on slavery would express more affiliative themes – the kind of

message that Shnabel and Nadler (2008; see also Shnabel, Nadler, Ullrich, Dovidio, & Carmi, 2009) proposed would be more effective with members of perpetrator groups – than those who watched the segment about mountains (the control condition). Moreover, because individuals who are higher on personal need for power are generally more effective communicators (Schultheiss & Brunstein, 2002), these effects for intergroup communication were expected to be more pronounced for higher power-oriented Black participants.

The results were as predicted. Blacks with stronger personal need for power showed a particularly high level of affiliation in their messages to Whites after viewing the segment on slavery; there was no effect on their expressions of power. Dittmann et al. explain that higher power-oriented Blacks more readily adjust their communication to the needs of the White audience and thus may be more effective in reaching common understanding and being persuasive with them. Indeed, Jones et al. (2009) demonstrated that emphasizing the history of racial oppression and slavery in the United States activates perceptions of contemporary fairness more strongly in Whites, which may make them particularly receptive to positive overtures from Blacks that reinforce moral acceptance.

Bergsieker, Shelton, and Richeson (2010) further proposed that making group identity salient in intergroup interaction in itself can evoke different needs, irrespective of whether historical conflict is explicitly referenced. Bergsieker et al. also presented a general framework for understanding why different needs are activated in these interactions. In general, people automatically appraise groups, both others' and their own, on two fundamental dimensions: warmth and competence. Warmth encompasses related perceptions of trustworthiness and moral virtue. Competence relates to status and power. Stereotypes of majority groups typically depict them as high in competence but low in warmth, whereas minority groups are often seen as low in competence but high in warmth. As a consequence, in intergroup interactions majorities and minorities have impression management goals to address their perceived deficiency, warmth for majority-group members and competence for minority-group members. Accordingly, in intergroup interactions, majority group members primarily seek to be liked whereas minority-group members primarily aim to be respected.

Consistent with their hypotheses, in a series of studies of interactions between Whites and Blacks or Latinos, Bergsieker et al. (2010) found that Whites demonstrated an enhanced desire to be liked and Blacks displayed greater desire to be respected in intergroup interactions than

in interactions with other members of their own group. Moreover, they endorsed specific strategies in intergroup interactions designed to satisfy these different needs. Whites increased their ingratiating behavior (e.g., smiles, nods, flattery) in intergroup compared to same-race interactions, whereas Blacks and Latinos increased their self-promoting behaviors (e.g., displaying confidence nonverbally, mentioning accomplishments or achievements). The researchers further observed that “the sharp divergence in behaviors associated with respect versus liking impression management goals can render these behaviors incompatible. These goals may entail mutually exclusive behaviors, such as adopting an informal and relaxed versus confident and purposeful tone. . . . These differences are likely to lead to uncoordinated, asynchronous, and dysfunctional interactions” (p. 250). We consider this possibility further in the next section.

Intergroup Interactions and Intergroup Relations

Although individuals may share the same set of basic personal motivations, thinking of oneself and others in terms of group membership can arouse different needs and motives. These needs are determined by historical events and current group status. According to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), a person’s experience of identity varies along a continuum that ranges at one extreme from personal identity as a separate individual with unique motives and goals, to social identity in which one thinks of the self in terms of group membership. When social identity is salient, the goals and achievements of the group are merged with one’s own. Intergroup encounters typically increase the importance of group membership and thus make social identity more prominent, creating a potential for volatile interpersonal dynamics. In this section we review the challenges of intergroup interactions and discuss how, even in the absence of explicit reminders of historical injustice, these interactions are influenced by the different perspectives and needs of majority and minority group members which may be rooted in these events.

Anticipating Interaction

Intergroup contact can be one of the most robust predictors of positive intergroup understanding, empathy, and relations, yet members of both majority and minority groups regularly fail to engage each other,

often because of intergroup misperceptions. For instance, although both Whites and Blacks report being interested in interacting with members of the other group, they often avoid these interactions because they anticipate and fear rejection by members of the other group (Shelton & Richeson, 2005). Moreover, this misperception of the other group as uninterested in intergroup interaction and rejecting of overtures for contact is greater among low-prejudiced Whites, who may have more invested in having these interactions, than among high-prejudiced Whites (Shelton, Richeson, & Bergsieker, 2009). Vorauer, Main, and O'Connell (1998) observed similar processes between racial majority (White Canadians) and minority (Aboriginal Canadians) in Canada. They found that White Canadians and Aboriginal Canadians believed that the other group had a negative stereotype of their group (i.e., perceived negative meta-stereotypes), which produced negative expectations for their interaction.

In part as the result of heightened vigilance and negative expectations, intergroup interactions are characterized by much higher levels of intergroup anxiety than are exchanges between members of the same group (Plant, Butz, & Tartakovsky, 2008). Within the United States interethnic contact, in particular, is often marred by anxiety and distrust, and thus both Whites and Blacks experience heightened anxiety in interracial compared to intraracial interactions, but for somewhat different reasons. Whites' anxiety relates, in part, to the increased cognitive demand associated with not wanting to appear biased (see Richeson & Shelton, 2010). In comparison, Blacks' anxiety and arousal is related largely to vigilance in detecting bias and ways of coping with anticipated prejudice and discrimination (Vorauer, 2006). Feelings of anxiety in anticipation of interaction motivates members of majority and minority groups to avoid intergroup interaction. Avoiding intergroup interactions, in turn, reinforces intergroup misunderstandings, because it limits the opportunities for people to correct their misperceptions of the characteristics of members of other groups and of the ways that members of other groups view them.

Interaction and Diverging Perspectives

Intergroup interactions are not only more volatile than encounters between members of the same group because of the perspectives that group members bring to these situations, but also because the misunderstandings and tensions that arise in these interactions can further contribute to divergent group perspectives. In mixed-race interactions,

for example, participants typically refer to the crossed-race nature of the exchange in interpreting the other person's actions and making attributions for their behavior (Richeson & Trawalter, 2005). Accordingly, positive behaviors and successful outcomes are more likely to be attributed to internal, stable characteristics of ingroup than outgroup members, whereas negative outcomes are more likely to be ascribed to the personalities of outgroup than ingroup members. In intergroup interactions, Blacks who expect to encounter bias more strongly from a White partner like their partner less, experience more negative affect, and feel that the interaction is less authentic. As Miller and Prentice (1999) observed, interpersonal interactions between members of different groups occur across a "category divide." As a consequence, when members of different groups disagree in intergroup interactions, they may assess the situation as being less open to a solution than in intragroup interactions. Miller and Prentice (1999) contend that this misunderstanding can be quite costly because once people label disagreement as reflecting group differences, they believe it is especially difficult to resolve the conflict.

Unintentional and subtle forms of bias, often rooted in spontaneously activated (implicit) attitudes and stereotypes, also shape intergroup interaction in significant and systematic ways. In general, implicit intergroup attitudes are a powerful predictor of intergroup behavior, especially for behaviors that are expressed spontaneously (Dovidio, Kawakami, Smoak, & Gaertner, 2009b). Particularly when people lack the motivation or ability to monitor, or the cognitive resources to control, their behaviors, implicit attitudes and stereotypes are likely to determine how they behave toward members of other groups and how they interpret the behaviors of others in return. For instance, implicit prejudice especially predicts negative nonverbal behavior, which is difficult to monitor and control, in intergroup interactions (see Dovidio et al., 2009b).

The subtle, unintentional, and potentially unconscious nature of contemporary racial prejudice in the United States is particularly problematic with respect to producing divergent perspectives in interracial interactions. Whites and Blacks have fundamentally different perspectives on the attitudes implied and the actions demonstrated by Whites during these interactions. Whites have full access to their explicit attitudes and are able to monitor and control their more overt and deliberative behaviors. These types of attitudes and behaviors are generally non-prejudiced and nondiscriminatory. However, Whites do not have such full access to their implicit attitudes or to their less easily monitored behaviors. These behaviors, such as nonverbal behaviors,

thus reflect their unconscious negative feelings and beliefs. As a consequence, Whites' beliefs about how they are behaving or about how Blacks perceive them are based primarily on their explicit attitudes and their more overt behaviors, such as the verbal content of their interaction with Blacks, and not on their implicit attitudes or less deliberative (i.e., nonverbal) behaviors. Consistent with this reasoning, Dovidio, Kawakami, and Gaertner (2002) found that Whites who reported that they were less prejudiced expressed more positive orientations verbally and reported that they behaved in a more friendly way in the interracial interactions.

In contrast to the perspective of Whites, the perspective of Black partners in these interracial interactions allows them to attend to both the spontaneous (e.g., nonverbal) and the deliberative (e.g., verbal) behaviors of Whites. As Dovidio et al. (2002) further found, Black partners attended more to Whites' nonverbal behaviors, which typically signaled more negativity than their verbal behaviors. Black partners therefore generally perceived that Whites were less friendly than Whites thought they were, and Blacks were less satisfied with the interaction than were Whites. Moreover, the Black and White interaction partners were unaware that the other person viewed the experience differently than they did. Thus, these interracial interactions were characterized by divergent perspectives and fundamental misunderstandings.

These dynamics also operate in relatively structured and task-oriented intergroup interactions (Penner et al., 2010). For example, in interracial interactions with Black patients, non-Black doctors' perceptions of the medical encounter were influenced only by their explicit racial attitudes. Less prejudiced doctors reported after their interaction that they tried to involve the Black patient more in decision-making. In contrast, Black patients were sensitive to the doctors' implicit attitudes. Doctors who had more negative implicit attitudes were seen as less warm and friendly by patients. In addition, patients were least satisfied with their visit when the doctor had positive explicit attitudes but negative implicit attitudes. Presumably the contradictory signals exhibited by such doctors undermined the patient's trust and confidence in their physician. Thus, people may not only enter intergroup interactions with more negative expectancies and greater levels of anxiety than they do for intragroup interactions, but these biases can also take on a dynamic nature in social exchange and create even more divergent perspectives, which further exacerbates anxiety around intergroup interaction.

Further contributing to this dynamic, social categorization also shapes how people interpret nonverbal cues displayed by another

person with whom they are interacting, especially those related to anxiety (e.g., self-touch, inconsistent gaze, closed posture). For instance, people are more likely to perceive hostility in the face of an outgroup member and to misperceive neutral facial expressions as conveying anger for outgroup than ingroup members (e.g., Hugenberg & Bodenhausen, 2004). Because the nonverbal cues of anxiety overlap with those indicating dislike, anxiety-related behaviors are particularly likely to be interpreted in biased ways. For example, cues to anxiety may be interpreted as discomfort with the situation when displayed by a member of one's own group but as unfriendliness, as well as discomfort, when demonstrated by a member of a different groups. The systematic misinterpretations of nonverbal cues, such as manifestations of anxiety, can have both immediate and longer-term effects on dyadic and group relations.

Pearson et al. (2008), for example, showed that intergroup interactions are substantially more fragile than intragroup exchanges. Whereas a slight (one-second) delay in audiovisual feedback between interaction partners over closed-circuit television, which was imperceptible to participants, had no detrimental affect on same-race dyadic relations, it had a significant adverse effect on cross-race dyadic interactions. Of particular importance was how this delay led participants in cross-race interactions to perceive their rapport more negatively, compared to a control condition. Participants in cross-race interactions became more anxious as a function of the delay, and they perceived more anxiety in their partner. However, it was the perception of the partner's anxiety, not their personally experienced anxiety, that primarily mediated the lower level of rapport. These effects were symmetrical for both White and Black interaction partners. The overall pattern of findings in this study further demonstrates that perceived anxiety carries surplus meaning in cross-race interaction that disrupts social coordination and rapport.

Moreover, these processes, can extend beyond initial interactions between strangers and have persistent effects across time. In a demonstration of this, West, Shelton, and Trail (2009) investigated the role of the experience of anxiety in friendship development in roommates, who were randomly assigned to same- and cross-race pairs, over 15 days during the first weeks of living together. Consistent with previous findings, West et al. found that only for interracial roommate pairs did one interaction partner's anxiety experienced one day carry over to predict their roommate's anxiety the following day. That is, there was a "contagion" of anxiety between roommates of different races but not between roommates of the same race. Also, in cross-race roommate

dyads, the more one's roommate was anxious across the 15-day period of the study, the less the respondent desired to live with that roommate in the future. This pattern of results was similar for White and racial minority participants. Overall, these findings reveal that for cross-race but not same-race roommates, partner anxiety lingers to influence how people feel themselves the following day. Considered in combination with the findings from previous studies (e.g., Pearson et al., 2008), this also suggests a general tendency for both Whites and Blacks to interpret ambiguous signals from the other as signs of negativity, something that has important practical implications. In intergroup interactions, one person's uneasiness becomes another person's dislike, and divergent perspectives develop. Over time, mutual uneasiness interferes with the ability of members of different groups to develop positive relations on an interpersonal level.

Although both majority and minority group members are vulnerable to many of the same processes contributing to divergent perspectives, there may be distinctive influences, as well. People who feel that their group is the target of prejudice are sensitive to cues of discrimination. With respect to Black-White relations in the United States, Blacks' daily encounters with potential discrimination may lead individuals to interpretations that confirm that prejudice exists and to label ambiguous behaviors as discriminatory. Additionally, Blacks and Whites may use different cues to detect the racial bias of Whites, and have different thresholds for determining the presence of bias. For example, Whites readily identify blatant expressions of bias but tend not to recognize subtle bias, whereas Blacks (and other traditionally disadvantaged groups) attend to ambiguous forms of bias (Salvatore & Shelton, 2007). Overall Blacks show greater accuracy in the detection of bias than do Whites. For instance, Richeson and Shelton (2005) found that Black judges (as a set) were better able to detect both the racial bias levels of White individuals from 20 seconds of their nonverbal behavior during interracial interactions than were White judges.

As the work reviewed in this chapter suggests, successful intergroup interaction, social relations, and reconciliation between groups require that the different psychological needs of members of perpetrating and victimized groups be recognized, acknowledged, and satisfied. However, as the research on intergroup interactions that we reviewed reveals, members of these groups are frequently unaware of the different needs of members of the other group. Thus, although both groups may desire reconciliation, they may adopt strategies that best satisfy their own group's needs but leave members of the other group dissatisfied. We illustrate these dynamics in the next section.

Strategies for Improving Intergroup Relations

The divergent perspectives of members of groups with a history of conflict not only shape the dynamics of intergroup interaction, as illustrated in the previous sections of this chapter. They also influence the strategies people adopt to create stable intergroup relations and civil societies. In particular, members of groups responsible for past violence, who generally are interested in acceptance, tend to pursue strategies that deflect attention away from different group identities and create social harmony. They seek to create interactions that focus on commonalities and support policies, such as assimilation, that de-emphasize group differences (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, 2009a). By contrast, members of groups that were victimized historically or are victimized by structural violence in the present have heightened needs for respect and empowerment (Bergsieker et al., 2010; Shnabel et al., 2009). Accordingly, they tend to emphasize the distinct identities of the groups, reflecting the importance of their social identity to their historical and contemporary experience (Jones et al., 2009). However, recognizing the interdependent nature of intergroup relations, they also simultaneously emphasize common identity with members of historically dominant groups to create a sense of moral inclusion and sensitize members of the dominant groups to the existence of procedural injustices, in the present as well as in the past.

Although members of both groups may have the same goal of achieving a fair, stable, and civil society, their commitments to different ways to achieve this goal can further exacerbate contemporary intergroup tensions. With respect to racial perspectives in the United States, for example, Whites prefer assimilation as a dominant cultural ideology, whereas Blacks most prefer multiculturalism, in which different group identities are respected within a common national identity (Dovidio et al., 2009a). As a consequence of their preference for assimilation, Whites respond more negatively to Blacks who more strongly assert their racial identity. Moreover, when racial tensions are on the rise, Whites endorse assimilation even more strongly. When racial tensions increase, Blacks, in contrast, show a stronger preference for multiculturalism (Dovidio et al., 2009a). Thus the tendencies that Whites and Blacks adopt to resolve contemporary conflict may ironically create greater conflict. Consistent with this proposition, Apfelbaum, Sommers, and Norton (2008) found that although avoidance of race was seen as a favorable strategy by Whites for promoting more positive interracial interactions, in practice failure to acknowledge race actually resulted in *greater* perceptions of racial prejudice by Black interaction partners.

Conceptually, emphasizing a single common group identity (as assimilation often does) or dual identities (separate racial/ethnic identities within a superordinate identity, as multiculturalism does) represent two main strategies in the Common Ingroup Identity Model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2009) for improving intergroup relations. The basic premise of the Common Ingroup Identity Model is that factors that induce members of different groups to recategorize themselves as members of the same, more inclusive group can reduce intergroup bias through cognitive and motivational processes involving ingroup favoritism. Thus, the more positive beliefs, feelings, and behaviors usually reserved for ingroup members are extended or redirected to former outgroup members because of their recategorized ingroup status. Consequently, recategorization dynamically changes the conceptual representations of the different groups from an “us” versus “them” orientation to a more inclusive, superordinate connection: “we.”

Experimental evidence of intergroup attitudes in support of the Common Ingroup Identity Model comes from research using both ad hoc and real groups, with children as well as adults, and in the United States (see Gaertner & Dovidio, 2009, for a review) as well as in other countries (e.g., Guerra et al., 2010). Common identity also promotes intergroup forgiveness and trust. Wohl and Branscombe (2005) showed that increasing the salience of Jewish students’ “human identity” in contrast to their “Jewish identity” increased their perceptions of similarity between Jews and Germans, as well as their willingness to forgive Germans for the Holocaust and their willingness to associate with contemporary German students.

The Common Ingroup Identity Model further proposes that the development of a common ingroup identity does not necessarily require each group to forsake its less inclusive group identity. Social identities are complex; every individual belongs to multiple groups simultaneously. Thus, depending on their degree of identification with different categories and contextual factors that make particular identities more salient, individuals may activate one or more of these identities. As reflected by the “subgroups within one group” (i.e., a dual identity) representation, it is possible for members to conceive of two groups (for example, science and art majors) as distinct units within the context of a superordinate (i.e., university identity) social entity. Whereas Whites generally prefer a one-group representation, Blacks show a preference for a dual identity.

Even though efforts to emphasize a common one-group identity or a dual identity may immediately satisfy the needs of the historically dominant *or* the victimized group, potentially arousing feelings of

threat and bias among members of the other group, we suggest that it is important to understand the dynamic nature of post-conflict intergroup relations. Specifically, it may be possible, particularly because of their reliance on similar psychological principles and processes, to introduce interventions that emphasize common or dual identity *sequentially*.

Kelman (2005), for example, described the activities and outcomes of a program of workshops designed to improve Palestinian-Israeli relations and to contribute to peace in the Middle East. The foundational understanding that needs to be established first in these workshops is the existential interdependence of the groups. The long-term fates of Israeli Jews and Palestinians in the Middle East are inexorably intertwined. The recognition of this common fate provides the platform for the Palestinian and Israeli participants to develop a common workshop identity. The activities in these workshops then focus on searches for solutions that satisfy the needs of both parties. This structure of the workshop changes relations between the groups from competition to cooperation and facilitates the development of mutually differentiated national identities within a common goal. Moreover, it is possible to see respect for difference and diversity not only as beneficial for solving complex problems but also, eventually, as an integral aspect of group common identity (Jans, Postmes, & van der Zee, 2011).

The most effective sequencing of emphases on common and dual identities, however, may vary by the nature of intergroup relations. For groups that engaged in conflict historically, but that are not in immediate crisis and already share a sense of mutual interdependence and common national identity, such as Blacks and Whites in the United States, an initial focus on commonality may not only be unnecessary but may be counterproductive. It may deflect attention away from the real issues of concern and undermine the motivation of both dominant and non-dominant group members to address the structural issues that perpetuate historical inequities, but in subtle ways (Saguy, Tausch, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2009).

To address issues of race relations in the United States, dialogue groups are a popular and effective intervention on college campuses (Nagda & Zúñiga, 2003). This approach recognizes the kinds of misperceptions and miscommunications that commonly occur in intergroup interactions, and thus structures and facilitates these interactions. Based on the assumption that the members of different groups enter these dialogues with a sense of shared university and national identity, dialogue groups strive initially to create greater understanding of the unique perspectives, needs, motivations, and feelings of members of

different groups. With common identity already existing, the initial emphasis of dialogue groups is on acknowledging and respecting different group identities. Participants are discouraged from retreating from tension for superficial harmony; instead dialogue groups focus on building skills for understanding others, appreciating differences, and then recognizing the mutual benefit for the common good for taking action to achieve social justice and equity.

Thus the most effective sequence of emphasizing common, different, or dual identity may depend on whether intergroup conflict is current or past, whether groups already have some degree of common identity and sense of interdependence, and the goals, needs, and motivations of interaction partners. The key point is that although an initial emphasis on common or dual identity may not satisfy the needs of members of the different groups simultaneously, reducing intergroup tension and promoting reconciliation are complex processes that require “staging” different interventions in sequence such that over time the unique needs of members of both groups are met and the interdependence and shared identity of the groups are recognized.

Conclusion

In the previous sections, we reviewed how the mere categorization of others as members of one’s own group (the ingroup) or another group (an outgroup) systematically biases how people evaluate others, what they expect of them, and how they orient themselves toward others as they begin interaction. Although mere categorization may provide a foundation for bias to develop, historical conflict between groups further shapes the specific nature of contemporary intergroup relations and biases. These biases do not have to be consciously endorsed. Exposure to a member of another group automatically activates implicit attitudes, stereotypes, and behavioral predispositions toward the person and the group. Because these implicit biases often conflict with people’s conscious positive intentions, they substantially contribute to divergent group perspectives, miscommunication, and mistrust. In addition, in interactions with outgroup and ingroup members, people interpret subtle behavioral expressions, such as facial expressions and nonverbal manifestations of anxiety, in different ways between the groups. Cues of anxiety, for example, are typically interpreted as a sign of the partner’s dislike in intergroup interaction but not in intragroup social exchanges (Pearson et al., 2008). Members of historically victimized groups are particularly attuned to signals that could suggest rejection or disrespect.

Escalation of tension, distrust, and conflict can occur even when intergroup intentions are positive – and in part because of positive intentions and efforts. Attempts to suppress negative stereotypes and attitudes or to manage one’s behavior to appear non-prejudiced or be colorblind (Apfelbaum et al., 2008) can increase anxiety and misperceptions in communication. These behaviors, in turn, are often interpreted as cues of unfriendliness by members of another group, particularly members of disadvantaged groups. In addition, attempts to appear colorblind or to focus primarily on commonalities fail to satisfy minorities’ needs for respect and will further exacerbate tension. Because people believe that their good intentions are transparent to their partners in their interactions, they fail to comprehend the impact on their partners’ impressions of negative cues (e.g., nonverbal behaviors) that are difficult to monitor and control. Intergroup interactions are thus highly susceptible to confusion, miscommunication, and the development of divergent perspectives which perpetuate intergroup distrust and bias.

Nevertheless, it may be possible to develop interventions, tailored to the nature of historical and contemporary intergroup relations, to reduce intergroup tension, improve relations, and promote stable and lasting reconciliation. The key idea of the Common Ingroup Identity Model is that factors that induce members of different groups to recategorize themselves as members of the same, more inclusive group can reduce intergroup bias through cognitive and motivational processes involving ingroup favoritism (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2009). However, whether recategorization in terms of a single superordinate identity or dual identities is effective depends significantly on the historical and contemporary status of the groups, whether intense intergroup conflict is past or ongoing, and the way intergroup interactions are structured. Although intergroup contact has significant potential for improving intergroup relations, unmanaged intergroup interaction also has the potential to escalate intergroup conflict. Intergroup conflicts in the historical past still shape the feelings, perceptions, motivations, and goals in ways that create different realities and interfere with the creation and maintenance of civil and fair societies.

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